Dhaka, Wednesday, October 19, 1994

Police: People Ratio

One policeman for 1,429 souls in our country is a piece of news that tells but only half the truth. The UNB-circulated report, based on an article published by the Asiaweek magazine which we frontpaged on Monday contained information which render even that gap in the cop: citizen ratio more yawning. Since half of our 84,000strong police force remains engaged in protecting the VIPs and key installations, to say nothing of following close behind processions and keeping an eye on strikes and meetings, the chasm becomes doubly uncomfortable with one policeman for every 2858 persons in the country. And, by the law of socio-economic gravitation, much of the police force is concentrated in the cities so that for rural Bangladesh we have far more of an adverse police: people ratio.

Add to this the poor equipment base of the police force. An off-the-cuff remark heard these days is that mastans outnumber policemen both in the head-count as well as in ammunition. This comment cannot be entirely dismissed out of hand. We are arrayed against the dark order of a political legacy that lives off its own tissues. Nothing short of a total abandonment of armstwisting and musclemanry, by a political covenant, mutually arrived at, between the major political parties in enlightened self-interest, will tone up the rather relaxed norms in the social order. Seldom have we found whole bunches of dare-devils giving an awkward respectability to ordinary crimes as we see today. Thus we notice a spate both in the category of ordinary offences as well as in the latest, more violent, variety of group criminality. The success of crime control hinges on our uncompromised ability to separate the offenders from the rest of the society and proceed against them without fear or favour. Distinctions have seemed blurred at times.

When cataloguing the equipment deficiencies of the police force we have a tendency to put sophisticated electronic gadgets on top of the list. While in time we will have acquired them, the simple requirement today is that each of our thanas should have a fast-moving vehicle of its own. Since they have not got one, it is a more primitive form of mobility they are making do with than what even the horses had ensured during the British rule. No wonder, a murderer gets away. Preemptive strikes out of the question. And, as the Asiaweek magazine concluded, Bangladesh has perhaps become "a safe haven for the criminals.

In the metropolises, the police with a few transports of their own often go for requisitioning private vehicles for what happens to be a purpose other than crime control as such. This tends to severely disrupt the normal flow of civic life and business transactions. The police should have an adequate number of vehicles of their own to avert such chaos visiting us with a routine regularity.

Given the limited number and the poor state of equipment of the police force, we may turn out to be fatalist placing our personal security entirely in the hands of Providence. However, the question is : are we effectively utilising the residual half of the police force in the priority areas of law enforcement to make the environment congenial to productive civic lives? Whatever their number, they seem to be otherwise visible, but sometimes in wrong places.

Israel, Jordan Come Closer

Unpredictable things are happening in the Middle East. Old foes are becoming friends if not the vice versa. The process got going with Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) sinking their differences. Egypt had long made peace with the Jewish state that fought a series of war against its Arab neighbours to capture their territories. Now in a radically changed world, Israel has also softened its stand and the neighbouring countries have hardly any point fanning the antagonism that has cost the two sides enormously — both in terms of lives and property. Jordan which althrough maintained an independent line and even co-operated with the Tel-Aviv government on certain issues, has indeed taken a long time to make a formal peace deal with Israel.

Better late than never. It may be the second country to make formal peace with Israel but compared with other Arab countries in the region Jordan had an advantage to enter into a peace accord with the once common enemy. This time both countries have been goaded by the United States of America to abandon the warpath — infact before the signing of the treaty they were in a state of war — and come to a negotiated settlement of the land disputes. The signing of the draft peace accord between Israel and Jordan on October 17 has taken care of most of the thorny issues. The progress made by the two sides is remarkable.

Jordan may not get back all the lands it lost to Israel in the 1948 war but the little compromise it had to make will not seriously affect its territorial integrity. Most of the lands will be directly returned to Jordan, some on lease and others through territorial exchanges. That sounds nice because here is an ample demonstration of the spirit of co-operation on the part of both countries. Another breakthrough they have made is the agreement on starting new projects on the Yarmouk River to augment water flows to Jordan. So if the treaty is not completely satisfying for either of the party, it has tried to address the complex issues through mutual co-operation.

The breaking of new grounds for peace by Israel augurs well for not only that region but also, to a certain degree, the world at large. Israel is fast coming out of its long international isolation through such pragmatic compromise deals with its neighbours. A full recognition of a Palestinian state is the ultimate expectation of not only the stateless people with the longest refugee status in the world, but also of all other nations on the globe. A good neighbourliness with the Arab countries makes the task easier for Israel. Israel may find a difficult customer in Syria but once peace has been made with other neighbours, narrowing the differences for the latter with the former becomes inevitable. Israel has moved a long way to earn the trust of its neighbours and they too can take it into confidence. But the real test of its good intention will be in its dealing with the inevitable emergence of a Palestinian state.

Inventing a New World Bank EW YORK - The two Bretton Woods institutions both turned 50 at the end of September. global monetary system was exchange rates. That system

providing an occasion to reflect on what how far they have gone in accomplishing their tasks in global economic governance.

The sad truth is that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are now but a shadow of their original vision.

In 1944, John Maynard Keynes proposed a Fund equal to one-half of world imports so that it could exercise a major influence on global mone tary system. In actual practice, IMF controls today liquidity only equal to two percent of world imports.

Keynes envisioned the IMF as a central world bank, issuing its own reserve currency (bancors). But the half-hearted IMF experiment to create its own Special Drawing Rights in the 1970s was doomed to fail when the United States refused to control its balance of payments deficits, or to restrict its own role as the central banker of the world.

Not surprisingly, global flnancial markets today hold their collective breath awaiting words from Alan Greenspan (Chairman of the US Federal Reserve Board) - not IMF Managing Director Michael Camdessus.

The heart of the IMF-led

E have by now be-come sufficiently im-

standards at play in the

international arena where

hypocrisy has become a way of

diplomatic life particularly for

the dominant Western powers.

The gyrations of these power-

ful countries over Bosnia.

Palestine. Rwanda and now

Haiti do not even occasion

surprise. It should therefore

not disturb our sensibilities too

much if more evidence of such

hypocrisy should intrude into

of our sensibilities over the

application of double standards

I still felt a sense of profound

irritation when I read of com-

plaints by the Western team

managers about the remark-

able success of the Chinese

swimmers in the recently con-

cluded World Swimming

Championship in Rome. These

concerns have been com-

pounded by the overwhelming

victories of the Chinese

swimmers in the Asian Games

now underway in Hiroshima.

As we all know the Chinese

women swept the board win-

ning 12 out-of 16 gold medals

competed for by women in

Rome and won every single

medal on offer for swimming

in Hiroshima. The Chinese

girls had in fact been gradually

improving their performance

in the swimming pool for the

last 5 years so this success was

hardly new but the extent of

the success was indeed re-

markable. In Rome neither the

once dominant Germans nor

the traditionally dominant US

Swimmers could challenge the

Chinese who swept up the

medals on offer both in the

swimming pool and on the

diving board. Instead of con-

gratulating the Chinese for

their remarkable progress in

the swimming arena where an

as yet underdeveloped country

has come to dominate a sport

which had hitherto been the

monopoly of fair skinned peo-

ple from North America,

Europe and Australia, the

coaches of the defeated

swimmer's have been whining

loudly that the Chinese success

is the result of performance

there is a presumption of

Asiatic inferiority where

Chinese girls are presumed in-

capable of winning any sport

on the basis of their natural

skills. There is a built-in image

slight, demure girls, who clad

in tight cheong sams, are sup-

posed to perform the tradi-

tional role of concubine, in the

tradition of Suzy Wong, the

of the Chinese as slant-eyed.

In this winging by the West

enhancing drugs.

Allowing for the hardening

the sports arena.

V munised to the double

from gold and the introduction of floating exchange rates. All subsequent attempts to introduce a modicum of exchange rate stability have proved largely futile

Keynes regarded balance of payments surpluses a vice and deficits a virtue, since deficits sustained global effective demand and generated more employment. This led him to advocate a penal interest rate of one per cent a month on outstanding trade surpluses.

died in the early 1970s with

the delinking of the US dellar

The situation today is exactly the reverse: It is the deficit nations, particularly those without a reserve currency of their own, who carry a disproportionate share of the burden of adjustment.

The World Bank was supposed to stand between the global capital markets and the developing countries and to recycle market funds to them by using its own creditworthiness and by gradually building up the creditworthiness of developing nations.

The recent record of the Bank is proof of its growing marginalisation. Out of a global surplus of nearly US\$200 billion a year, the World Bank is

In this exclusive column for Inter Press Service, Mahbub ul Hag, former senior official of the World Bank, outlines the dramatic departure of the two Bretton Woods institutions from the original vision for them set forth by John Maynard Keynes

recycling minus one to US\$2 billion in net terms towards the developing countries.

half a century ago.

Private markets are recy cling most of the global surplus but about three-fourths of it towards only ten countries.

The original Keynesian vision saw the World Bank as an institution for the expansion of global growth and employment levels rather than as an instrument of deflationary poli-

One of the most scathing

criticisms of the Bank in developing countries these days is that, instead of offering IMF healthy competition, the Bank has chosen a path of intellectual subservience. National budgets are being

balanced by unbalancing the lives of people - through demand reduction rather than supply expansion, through cuts in social spending rather than military spending, and in food

subsidies to the poor rather than tax subsidies to the rich.

Today the IMF and the World Bank are no longer institutions of global governance. They have a negligible impact on the economic or monetary policies of the industrial world and are by now primarily institutions to police the developing world.

In fact, no real institutions of global economic, monetary and financial management exist today, though the proposed World Trade Organisation may be an exception.

As far as IMF is concerned. it is rather charitable to call an entity that only influences the monetary policy of developing countries - which account for about 10 percent of global liquidity - an "international monetary fund."

And to describe an institution the "World Bank to the Nations of the World" when it

recycles almost negligible net financial resources to developing countries is no less gener-

As global interdependence has increased, institutions of global governance have weak ened, and we are back to ad hoc improvisations by rich na tions, either unilaterally or through loose coordination by G-7. This is not what was en-

visaged at Bretton Woods. With the memories of the Great Depression of the 1930s still fresh, the battle cry the Bretton Woods Conference of 1944 was "Never again"

Unemployment had been heavy, so the new objective was full employment. Trade and investment rules had broken down, so the new object tive was to prevent beggar-thyneighbour policies.

The international monetary system had collapsed - so the response was to maintain stable currencies with generally accepted procedures for adjustment.

Unilateral national policies had created global chaos and the cure was new institutions of global monetary and economic governance, with clear objectives and with global policy engineered through broad international consensus.

We are so far from that orig-

inal vision that today a basic question is whether we need the Bretton Woods institutions only to influence the policies of the developing countries, or to govern on a global scale.

Should we leave the fate of the global economic system to the ad hoc coordination of G-7 and the free workings of the international markets, or do we need a minimum of global economic management through professional analysis and consultative processes within international financial institutions?

It is troubling that such a question needs be asked once again. Keynes thought that he had settled this issue in 1944 by persuading the international community to reject unflateral ism in favour of multilateral-

Now that the Bretton Woods institutions are half a century old, we must seriously assess what must be done to shape them into institutions of genuine global governance.

In the next century, we need the IMF to become an International Central Bank and the World Bank to become an International Investment Trust. If these institutions are not up to the challenge, we may need to invent new ones.

The author, former Finance Minister of Pakistan, former senior official of the World Bank, is Special Adviser to the UNDP Administrator.

the West, which has left them

with a smaller physique, due to

poor diet, weaker health due

to inferior health care which

includes less access to such

chemical products as vitamin

pills as well as medicines for

both curing and improving

ones health, then a resort to

performance enhancing drugs

remains morally justifiable as a

means of correcting the

inequities of history. After all if

individuals in Western society

What Became of Suzy Wong?

by Rehman Sobhan

State investment in the development of sport in less developed economies is itself a response to the much better

opportunities available to athletes in the West. In the United States, universities provide special scholarships

to sportspersons of talent and serve as the nursery for world champions in athletics, swimming, basketball

Hong Kong call girl immortalized by Hollywood. These stereo-type images of Chinese women, which the famous Arab Palestinian scholar, Edward Said, terms orientalism, are hard for Westerners to reconcile with the reality of Chinese women who have been working in the fields and factories of China, where they have been driving tractors, trucks and operating lathe machines. These Chinese women have been exposed for nearly half a century to good health care and nutritious diet. That such women should now have the physique of any German or north American women is, bevond the imagination of the

male-centric mind-set which makes it difficult to accept that Chinese women should

has been attributed to drugs. The use of drugs as a performance enhancer in most sports dependent on physical capacities is not new. We have read about the ban on Maradona from participating in the recent World Cup, the withdrawal of Ben Johnson's gold medal after he won the 100 meters at the Seoul Olympics. We have heard of the ban for drug use on the East German, Katrina Krabbe, the European Champion in the womens 100 and 200 meters. Now that drug use is commonplace in international competitive sport, testing for drugs had become part of the follow-on of all sporting events There is furthermore a where athletes have to give urine samples after an event to

development though a rigorous regime of diet, exercise and training, which raises them to gold medal winning stature. can hardly be denied. A similar regime has enabled Cuba, a small and now poor developing country, to do extraordinarily well in such spots as boxing. athletics, basketball, volley ball and baseball. Indeed one of the features of the command economy has been its ability to commit resources to the promotion of sport and to take inordinate pains to extract good performances international competition. The dramatic successes in various sports, of the erstwhile European socialist states, over many years, supports this argument. It is recognised that victory in sport has a unifying see that their performance was

ball, boxing, athletics, swim ming, even tehnis, it is more than likely that various body and stamina building stimulants have been in use for many years. Indeed if you look at the herculean physique of the champion boxers of today compared to the bodies of manifestly more talented box ers such as Jack Dempsey. Gene Tunney or Joe Louis, or you see the gargantuan dimen sions attained by American footballers, it is not beyond imagination that this may have been realised by some scientific intervention. Since it is unlikely that Joe Louis or the famous American footballer, Red Grange, enjoyed a lower level of nutritional intake than the sports heroes of today, the presumption of science enhancing nature remains a strong possibility for the mod-

can use drugs to enhance their performance because they feel that nature has equipped them less satisfactorily than their competitors. then why cannot countries do My hunch is that the reason why performance enhancing drug are not used more widely. by sportspersons in the developed world is because it cannot compensate for the lack of skill or talent, the lack of competent coaching, the lack of adequate sports facilities, the lack of exposure to world class competition and the myriad other environmental constraints to which an athlete is exposed. At the end of the day it is the skill, the discipline and commitment of a sports person, along with the quality of their training which make the difference. The coach of a

drugs for breakfast, lunch and dinner but they will not make their wards into world champions, if they do not have the potential to be world champi-The grace and skill of the Chinese divers, their skills

top Indian woman athlete or a

Bangladeshi woman swimming

champion, may feed them

shown in the pool or the supreme talent of Noreddin Morcelli the Algerian record breaking middle distance runner, cannot come from drugs. It requires much more than drugs or we would all be living in a world of performance enhancing drugs where the unetalented come on par with the most talented. One can thus only hope that

Western sports managers will rather than in the headlines of newspapers

and American football, perform the tasks or possess the physical capacities associated with males, without having from their birth been stuffed with performance en hancing drugs which have blown them up like battery hens. It is indeed wildly spiculated that these drug-sodden Chinese sportswomen have been turned into men (presumably white men!), associated with deep voices, body hair and heaven knows what other signs of masculinity. Some even suggest that the girls may actually be men masquerading as women. As and when these women are sued up as gold machines their productive lives are prematurely terminated and they are discarded as trashed out junkies who have served their role to enhance the glory of the totali-

It may be recollected that similar noises were made when the Chinese girls began, in the last few years, to dominate the middle and long distance races in women's athletics. Here too the record-breaking performance of these girls, known as Ma's army, from the name of their famous coach.

tarian Chinese state. Thus in

one sweep the ideological, sex-

ist and racial prejudices of the

West coalesce in a chorus of

complaints from coaches,

swimmers and the western

press over the unfairness of

the Chinese successes.

not drug induced. Thus presumably all the Chinese gold medalists in Rome were exposed to a battery of test to confirm that their victories were drugs free, that they were indeed women and not men. Indeed because they were Chinese, these tests were, very likely, more rigorously administered than if they came from the 'civilised' west.

However the regular process of post-even testing is not seen by the Western critics as enough proof of the Chinese swimmers' natural abilities. It is now presumed that the wily oriental mind has now reached Nobel-prize winning stature in the field of Bio-Chemistry. backed no doubt by traditional oriental potions unknown to Western society which enable the Chinese to fabricate such advanced drugs that they escape detection from the primitive testing devices available to the backward West. What bigger compliment could be paid to Chinese science!

The fact that the Chinese do spend an enormous amount of state funds in promoting sport which is participated in by a population of one billion people, that special efforts are made to spot talented athletes when they are young and that these talented youngsters are then exposed to a process of skill development and physical

effect on countries and enhances their visibility in the international arena. It is no accident that Imran Khan is now no less well know as a public figure in Pakistan than is Benazir Bhutto or Nawaz Sharif or that the victories of the Pakistan and Indian cricket and hockey team, or the Brazilian football team have always been a cause for much national pride.

This state investment in the development of sport in less developed economies is itself a response to the much better opportunities available to athletes in the West. In the United States, universities provide special scholarships to sportspersons of talent and serve as the nursery for world champions in athletics, swimming, basketball and American football, advertising sponsorships has made sport into a big business where top sportspersons can expect to earn millions of dollars from advertising endorsements Thus the inducement of the

market mechanism is a stimulus to sporting excellence all over the world. However, this same lure of earning money rather than just glory is also a powerful encitenment to use chemical stimulants for enhancement of sports performance. In such lucrative sports as American football, basketenjoy excellent health services and have regular opportunities to play sport. To suggest that South Asian athletes go

ern sportsperson.

Drug testing is of course

relatively new. Drug use is not.

There is thus a presumption

that some such stimulants.

based on the use of steroids.

was being used by athletes in

all sports demanding both

good physique and stamina.

However to this must be added

the opportunities provided by

being born in a developed

country where they are likely

to drink milk, eat red meat,

through life with the same opportunities for physical development as their Western counterparts is laughable. Therefore the notion of a level playing field for all sportspersons who participated in international competition is as remote as it is for the world of international trade. It is thus not surprising that in less developed countries the state has to take a hand in levelling the international playing field in sport as it has done in East

development.

Do drugs serve as part of the process of levelling the playing field? on the plane of moral philosophy it does just that. If an Asian is to compensate for centuries of economic backwardness, compared to

Asia in the area of economic

rediscover their sense of sportsmanship. Thus will enable them to place the present change in the balance of sports power in some social and historical perspective, where they may try to shed their racial and sexist prejudices about Asian women. This will hopefully persuade them to concern trate their energies on training champions who can beat the Chinese in the sports arena

Private sector banking

Sir, It has come to light in the news media that the government has accorded approval to the functioning of seven more banks in the private sector. This obviously goes to show that in view of increasing range of economic activities in the country, the government has found it necessary to encourage more banks to be floated. Owing to the debacle of BCCI bank in Bangladesh in July '91 the government had taken commendable steps to restore the mentioned bank. In new nomenclature viz. Eastern Bank Limited from August, '92. But before the closure of BCCI, the Co-operative Islamic Commercial Bank Limited of 120, Z Shah House, Motijheel also stopped functioning. Another bank by the name of Bangladesh Commerce & Investment Ltd. also ceased to function almost the same time.

Thousands of depositors of

these two banks are suffering a

lot due to stoppage of their

functioning. When the deposi-

tors of these two Bank have

been eagerly awaiting govern-

ment steps for resumption of

the functioning of these two

It is known to all concerned that the government grants permission to the establishment of new banks, insurance companies and financial institutions after a substantial amount is kept as security deposit in the Bangladesh Bank by the sponsors of such organisations. Therefore, it seems to be easy for the government to compel the management of such organisations to account for their actions when they appropriate the funds and render the organisation into bankruptcy.

It is a matter of great misfortune that instead of taking stringent measures against the management of these banks and compelling them to restore functioning, the government have thought it wise to grant fresh permission for opening new banks.

The democratic government now in office, cannot shirk their duty and responsibility as they have preferred to remain as silent spectators, although the Ministry of Finance and the Bangladesh Bank have specific role to play and compel the management of these two banks so that they may re-open without anymore

Abdur Rahman Motijheel C/A, Dhaka.

Buying insult?

Sir, Through your widely circulated daily, I would like to draw the attention of the authorities concerned to the following matter. Bangladesh sent a large

contingent of sportsmen and sports women to the Asian Games accompanied perhaps by a disproportionately large number of officials. It all looked very nice in the opening ceremony. But result-wise it is an insult heaped on the nation. It all boils down to spending millions to advertise the poor state of our sporting

With international records available to everyone were we not aware of such results? Any excuse of sending sportsmen who are no where near the qualifying marks for international exposure does not hold water. Why can't we tell our sportsmen that when this poor country pays taxpayers' money nitely helped them to become

it expects them to earn laurels

and not insult? So, if they

cherish hopes of appearing in international meets they will have to tighten their belts and rise to the required level. The taxpayers do not want to see their hard-earned money squandered.

Shafquat Haider Chowdhury Chittagong University College

Sir, in this region of our sub-continent we see how leadership and power have been inherited. Jauharial Nehru, Indira Ghandi, Bhutto, Bandarnaik reared either their sons or daughters with good academic backgrounds in Europe or USA to receive the required enlightenment and education to become their country's future leaders.

Inheritance of power

As a result of this, we see their descendants coming into politics and proving their worth as able statesman. They do not solely bank on their parent's glorious past, background, eminence etc. But their individual leadership quality, policy making ability and well grooming have defi-

a proper politician and ulti-

mately successful states

man/stateswoman.

This is really a thought-provoking idea of this region's successful leaders in the context of inheritance of power for their country's future leadership.

Motius Samad Chowdhury Phultola Tea Estate, Sylhet

Killer trucks Sir, It seems, with the

change of circumstances, the killer trucks are back in scene, with not care a hoot attitude. They are back in action creating a state of terror, specially among the tiny tots — schoolgoing children. We recall the tragic death of the beautiful Rumana, a medical student, who was brutally crushed under the wheels of a truck last year, so was Elyas Kanchan's wife and the recent unfortunate seven and many others.

A few days back, two speeding trucks, as if competing in a grand prix, nearly bashed my car from behind and then almost ran over three tiny tots in a rickshaw, at Satmasjid Road. Had the truck hit us, we would have melted in bits. Hearing the horrified cry of the children, I just could not

check my emotion, but to drop them at their school buying them an icecream each.

We would like to draw the kind attention of the honourable Minister for Communica tion to reintroduce the traffic restrictions, however set by the Ershad Government, to get rid of the trucks during the day time and allow them to ply only after 9 pm. This step was wisely taken for the very safety of the public, specially the school-going children. We would appeal to the

honourable minister to seriously look into the matter and take immediate action to reintroduce the traffic restriction. before many others get killed To caution or set a speed limit, will be of no use to our truck drivers. The only remedy is to stop them ply during the day time and not before 9 pm. that is when the movement of others get thin. Stern measures should also be taken against reckless driving of buses.

Molnuddin Dhaka